

March 9, 2021

Written testimony in support of

1. SB 753 AN ACT CONCERNING THE COUNTING OF INCARCERATED PERSONS FOR PURPOSES OF DETERMINING LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS.
2. **SB 1014 AN ACT CONCERNING A MUNICIPAL ELECTION MONITOR FOR THE 2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION AND THE 2022 STATE ELECTION.**
3. SB 1016 AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL ETHICS.
4. SB 1017 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.
5. HB 5318 AN ACT RESTORING ELECTORAL PRIVILEGES TO CONVICTED FELONS WHO ARE ON PAROLE.
6. HB 5877 AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGIONAL ADOPTION OF ATLANTIC STANDARD TIME.
7. HB 6574 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STATE CODES OF ETHICS.
8. HB 6575 AN ACT CONCERNING RISK-LIMITING AUDITS FOR ELECTION RESULTS.
9. HB 6578 AN ACT CONCERNING PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.
10. HB 6579 AN ACT REVISING CERTAIN STATUTES CONCERNING VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.

Dear Co-Chairs, Senator Flexer and Representative Fox, and honorable members of the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee:

Thank you for your service to your constituents and our state – especially throughout the pandemic.

I am grateful to those of you who are committed to making our public institutions a bit better than you found them – especially in regard to the processes around properly conducting our elections and invigorating citizen engagement and voting.

Example one: The ELECTION MONITOR that a majority of you effectively sent to Bridgeport for the November 2020 election.

Thank you!

Please, let's continue this by approving **SB 1014 AN ACT CONCERNING A MUNICIPAL ELECTION MONITOR FOR THE 2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION AND THE 2022 STATE ELECTION.**

A couple relevant articles for your considerations:

1. CT Post: "**Elections monitor [Attorney Max Medina]: Bridgeport 'can be proud,' with some glitches but no catastrophes**", November 3, 2020, at <https://www.ctpost.com/elections/article/Elections-monitor-Bridgeport-can-be-proud-15699495.php>).
2. CT Post: "**Judge calls for major changes in absentee ballots; plaintiffs will appeal**", October 31, 2019, at <https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Judge-confirms-Ganim-s-primary-victory-14670613.php>

From article 2 above (bolded by me for emphasis), regarding the 2019 primary election:

*“In summary, the plaintiffs were successful in identifying **very serious election law violations**, but the heat of this evidence is not hot enough to vacate the entire primary in the manner they sought,” [Judge Barry] Stevens said to about 40 people. ...*

*In a rare public statement critical of governmental policy, Stevens, **noting that the case was the first of its kind in the state, indicated that Connecticut’s laws on absentee ballots are apparently being exploited, and need the close attention of the General Assembly.***

*In particular, **the judge called for early voting; prohibitions against party workers circulating absentee ballots; and an end to the strict requirements on the use of absentee ballots**, which are limited to military personnel, the sick or elderly and voters who plan to be out-of-town on election days.*

*“**The evidence as provided indicates very serious matters regarding the use of absentee ballots and this matter really warrants legislative consideration,**” Stevens said. “Most importantly, legislative consideration is warranted as to whether the handling of applications for absentee ballots, as well as the absentee ballots themselves, should be limited solely to election officials, electors and statutorily designated individuals identified to assist electors, and nobody else.”*

All of what Judge Stevens addressed to the General Assembly can only begin to be managed effectively with oversight by an impartial election monitor. Please permit us the needed impartial oversight by supporting **SB 1041**, which will fund the ELECTION MONITOR position for the next two election cycles in Bridgeport, giving our election officials and our voters the support we need to continue to build public trust and public participation in our elections.

In addition, to SB 1041, I strongly support each of the other 9 bills listed above for their sensible and just proposals that in total can, at little or no financial cost, boost the quality of our elections and governmental ethics. In doing so, they can help, with each of us, to bring about a more representative and robust democracy to meet the many challenges and opportunities ahead.

I appreciate your time. I wish you, your families, and your communities all the best.

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